

A Conversation with
Beth Aldrich

Guy Spiro: Beth, you have a television show that's based here in Chicago; why don't you tell our readers about it?

Beth Aldrich: It's called *For Her Information*. It's a 30-minute lifestyle show that started off being for women, but we're starting to gain men in our audience as well. The show is designed to offer information, ideas, and solutions to everyday questions for women. As diverse as women are is how diverse are our topics. We may touch upon spirituality, child or infant concerns, health, wellness, home improvements—it really depends on what women are curious about and what questions come our way via our website.

GS: Just how do these questions come to you?

BA: If you go to our website, you'll see at the top a logo that kind of floats around and asks, "What's your question? You could be on a future show." Clicking on it takes you to an email link. People then write us about a subject that they're curious and want to learn more about. We look at it and make a decision whether it's a question that could be weighty enough to sustain a show or a segment, and then we go about producing it. Or your question could be the topic of a future newsletter. For the summer, we're in hiatus for filming, but we are in development for the fall.

GS: If people suggest a question and it

gets accepted, they get to be on the show?

BA: Right. That's how I coined the trademarked phrase, "Conscious Reality TV." We decided to trademark it because there are lots of shows out there that I think would fit into the genre of conscious reality TV, they just haven't really titled themselves as such. Certain shows that are considered "reality television," I don't think they really bring you to a point where you're consciously thinking about how you might impact someone else's life, or impact the planet, or yourself.

GS: Let's define "reality."

BA: Yes, well, reality is coming from a position of seeing different things. I am really not an expert on that, and I don't know if we consider that producer Mark Barnett [*Survivor*, *The Apprentice*, etc.] coined the phrase "reality television." I do know that his shows are successful and they definitely have a formula. I'm not behind the scenes for production so I don't know what's real or what's not.

When we do our show, however, I do know that we don't script it whatsoever. All I have is a shot sheet with five or six questions that I'd like to ask the expert, who is a real person. We ask what their main concern is. Then we come up with a list of questions for them, so the expert feels comfortable. We contact the expert and explain that, for instance, we're going to be talking about your most recent book and ask if

there are any questions that you think we should include, that are important and that maybe we haven't focused on. Give me a list of ideals or ideologies, or things that you want us to possibly discuss. That way the experts don't feel sabotaged in any way and their message is clearly expressed. Now, we will have a lot of things come up that no one even realized would come up—you know, the natural evolution of a conversation. We never aim to sabotage or undermine anyone, and maybe that's why we'll never be on primetime Thursday. [Laughing.] And that's okay with me.

GS: You have a background in television.

BA: Yes, I've done a lot of on-camera work. I studied with the Alliance Theater in Atlanta. I did all the onboard videos for Delta Airlines for five years. I took training classes, and studied at the Improv Training Center. So, I feel very comfortable in front of people and presenting. But I think, as with anything, there is always room for improvement. This show is a perfect example. There is always room to learn, and I've been so grateful that I've been given the opportunity by PAX network and CAN TV, who I absolutely adore, in Chicago. They support local producers and students to get their shows on the air. A lot of our viewers have come to us via CAN TV. If I ever make a bazillion dollars, I would love to support them in any way I could because they really gave us our start, I think, because

The Monthly Aspectarian - www.lightworks.com 23

people noticed us from that network.

GS: So, how many shows have you made and broadcast at this point?

BA: As of right now, we have seventeen shows concluded, fifteen of them have been edited, and thirteen have aired. The two last episodes are currently in the final stages of editing. I'm getting ready to sign a contract for fourteen episodes of this first season to our broadcaster in Israel. So that's kind of fun. We work with a distributor out of Canada who promotes our show. She actually ran an ad for us in *Variety* magazine out Hollywood. It was really fun to open the magazine and, "there we are!" So it's slowly growing. Patience. I'm coming to realize that if it's your purpose, it will happen. It may not even happen in my lifetime, but I know that the ripple effect will somehow profoundly affect my children or my grandchildren. I can only hope that what I'm trying to create is basically raising awareness for women and men about making their lives purposeful, finding solutions, and ways to make it work.

GS: Who have you had on your shows, along with the spiritual and metaphysical lines?

BA: I just interviewed psychic Carmen Harra, who wrote the book *Everyday*

Karma, for our newsletter. She's phenomenal. We're going to be doing a story about her very soon. I was blessed enough to have a personal invitation from Rick Bayless to film him in his private garden. He talked about sustainable agriculture and how we can support that. Jane Goodall, who I think is one of the most incredible people in the world. She's so grounded and so amazing. She gave me one of her only interviews the last time she was here in Chicago. We've done other shows with doctors talking about uterine fibroids and alternative methods for healing fibroids instead of just getting a hysterectomy. On another show, we went to the Morton Arboretum and talked with the people who run that about the peaceful serenity at the arboretum, and how we can really impact the world by just taking care of our trees. It was a beautiful show. I love that show. And then we did a show about quick and healthy meals; how to save time and cook meals that are very elegant. So that's another way that you can spend more quality time with yourself, even giving you time to meditate or whatever, if you don't have to spend twelve hours in the kitchen. We met with raw foodist Karyn Calabrese and talked with her about what raw food is all about.

GS: I've known Karyn for years.

BA: She's a doll. Then we did a couple of show with children and learning and boundaries. We spoke with Rima Binder and talked about the book *Empowered Girls*, and about how individual women following their inner guidance, and really knowing at a young age that you can be a little mini philanthropist. You can support organizations, even through a lemonade stand. That was really very cool. We also did a show regarding mom entrepreneurs and talked with Rita Winters. She went on a silent retreat and meditated and really found her purpose. She realized that being in the big advertising corporate world wasn't for her and she shifted gears in midlife and completely changed her life. So that was a really wonderful show that we just completed filming a couple of weeks ago. All of them have a

connection to the earth in some way—maybe not as much to the heavens, but really it is, just maybe not blatantly.

GS: Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't covered so far?

BA: My goal is really to get my show placed on TBS Chicago. That would be, to me, complete contentment. You know, where we are now is a fabulous location, but the time slots and the locations of the networks can be a little bit challenging for a lot of our viewers; maybe they don't have digital cable or PAX Television, or maybe they don't want to get up at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday mornings. Because of that, I suggested that we create the newsletter so that we could promote the website and the show, but you could always go to the newsletter for learning and information and solutions.

I'd also like to stress the importance of staying connected, on our website and through our newsletter, so we can provide updates regarding the show. We want our newsletter to be more interactive with our readers. Our goal is to keep growing and expanding, and we're always looking for suggestions and ideas for topics we can explore and share with other people. For example, if a reader has found out something really profound and interesting or insightful, I would present it in the newsletter as a special edition. I think there is no reason why people who have magazines and newspapers shouldn't share as much as they can.

GS: That's the reason to have one.

BA: Yes. You know how sometimes you pitch an idea to someone for months and months and they don't get it because they're so busy and backlogged? I just want the newsletter to be a timely extension of the show so if we can't do a show on a topic, the information still gets out there.

For Her Information is seen on WCPX (PAX-TV Chicago) each Saturday at 5:30 a.m., and on CAN TV and iLifetv, which are available on Comcast Cable in the Chicago area. The show's website is www.ForHerInformation.com.

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